A

LETTER

TO

SIR FRANCIS BLAKE, BART.

WHEREIN HIS ARGUMENTS FOR THE

ABOLITION of TYTHES,

AND THE REFORM OF THE

CHURCH REVENUE,

Are candidly conſidered, and their Futility expoſed.

BEING A CONCISE, BUT RATIONAL,

DEFENCE of the preſent SYSTEM of TYTHES.

Quid ſtulti proprium? non poſſe et velle nocere.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the following Production I have not entered upon a general Hiſtory of Tythes, nor a particular Defence of the juſtice or injuſtice of ſome novel claims relative thereto; but chiefly confined myſelf to the conſideration of the Arguments adduced by Sir Francis Blake, in his Propoſal for the Abolition of Tythes, and the Reform of the Church Revenue. To expoſe the fallacy of his reaſoning, to combat the confidence of his aſſertions, and attempt to eſtabliſh the claims of the Church from unbiaſſed juſtice and fair argumentation, were the principal motives that incited me to undertake this Performance. Hiſtorical evidence and legal authority I have purpoſely omitted; the one might be deemed the reſult of ſuperſtition, the other of partiality. But when aſſumptions are adopted as incontrovertible principles, and concluſions drawn from them to weaken any eſtabliſhment, if their futility can be demonſtrated by argument, and their enmity to juſtice by facts, they ought to be deemed not only nugatory and trifling, but contradictory, falſe, and inconcluſive. Such is the attempt; with what ability it is executed, I ſubmit with all deference to the unbiaſſed judgment of the candid public to determine.

A LETTER to, &c.

SIR,

SOME years have elapſed ſince the firſt Publication of your Scheme for the total Abolition of Tythes, and the Reform of the Church Revenue. The third Edition is, no doubt, ſufficient evidence of its favourable reception with the Public, who is ever anxious to patronize the wildeſt chimeras, and the moſt improbable inconſiſtencies, if they be only ſanctioned by the palatable word, Reform. This has been an ignis fatuus to miſlead the credulous, from the earlieſt accounts of time, even to the preſent day. It favours their humours, and accords with their ill-grounded prejudices, by promiſing a ſpeedy exemption from all their burthens, real or imaginary. This propoſition, however improbable in the execution, or deluſive in the event, readily finds a number of votaries, by indulging their hopes, and flattering their prepoſſeſſions. But how far

the final iſſues of theſe ill-concerted reformations, have quadrated with their expectations, the hiſtories of paſt ages inform us. Here is a leſſon for the credulous, and a warning for the precipitate! And though ſome events are in no wiſe commenſurate to their cauſes, or anſwerable to the original deſigns of their ſanguine projectors, having by many unexpected contingencies departed altogether from their primary purpoſes; yet from the nature of things, and the juſt connection between cauſe and effect, we are warranted to conclude, that every violent and inconſiderate cauſe, muſt be productive of an effect, proportioned to the violence and abſurdity, which firſt put it in motion. How far this doctrine may meet with your acquieſcence, I know not, yet I believe that every candid and ingenuous reaſoner, will readily admit the truth of the axiom.

The violence and inconſideration of the meaſure that you enforce ſo ſtrenuouſly, will appear in its proper colours, when the arguments by which it is ſupported are candidly conſidered, and their futility expoſed. As every propoſition that can be reduced to a contradiction, is abſolutely falſe, ſo every ſcheme, that is founded upon ſpecious, but deceptive arguments, muſt upon refutation be abandoned

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as altogether untenable. This, I preſume, will be the fate of your favourite propoſal, which you nurtured with ſo much fondneſs, and uſhered into the world with ſo much precipitance; whether diſintereſtedly or no, I leave to the deciſion of your cooler moments, and the determination of your unbiaſſed judgment; I am not willing to probe that wound, which has already given you ſo much uneaſineſs, and the world, ſo curious and plauſible a performance, as your favourite propoſal.

I can readily believe, you know that illiberality and invective are no arguments; yet you throw them with no ſparing hand upon the whole body of the Clergy. Spleen and ill-nature are frequently the ebullitions of diſappointed avarice, which being in poſſeſſion of more than enough, views every little competency with a jaundiced eye, and malicioufly endeavours to graſp that competency within its devouring vortex. This is a trait that is ſeldom blended with the character of a worthy man. Avarice and honeſty are ſo incompatible, that they never can center in the ſame breaſt. Yet I am convinced, it is to this elaſtic ſpring alone, that the literary world is indebted for your production. When your conduct is viewed through this medium, it is certainly very re-

prehenſible; and to brand the Clergy with the odious epithets of avaricious and intereſted, in order to ſcreen yourſelf, is certainly very diſingenuous.

Take the Clergy, in the aggregate, and they are undoubtedly as reſpectable, and certainly the moſt learned body in the community. If not the moſt uſeful, in the eyes of ſome modern reformers, yet even they muſt acknowledge, that the benefits reſulting to ſociety, from the labours of the Church, are multifarious and extenſive; that they pervade every rank and ſtation of life, and ſcatter with ſo liberal a hand the ſeeds of piety, virtue, and religion, amongſt the opulent, the thoughtleſs, and the gay, as well as in the minds of the uneducated and unenlightened, that I truſt, neither the artful inſinuations of the hardened Deiſt, nor the hackneyed effrontery of the moſt abandoned Libertine, will ever be able to obliterate their good impreſſions.

The education of the Clergy is generally liberal and expenſive, and many years of the early part of their lives are paſt in the acquiſition of that knowledge by which they are in future to inſtruct their audience in all the important duties they owe to their Creator, their neigh-

neighbour, and themſelves. In this view of the caſe, would it not be ungenerous and illiberal, to deprive them of thoſe emoluments, which are only equivalent to that time and expence, which every Candidate for the Church muſt inevitably experience, before he is capacitated to enjoy any advantages adequate thereto. Thoſe emoluments which have exiſted from time immemorial, have received the venerable ſanction of paſt ages, have been confirmed to the Church by every legal grant, and held by the moſt inviolable of all tenures, would you, even in the wildeſt paroxiſm of chimerical reform, wiſh to ſee ſurreptitiouſly taken away, and render that perſon, who ought to be the moſt independent of any man in the community, dependent on the whim and caprice of the multitude?

You admit the Pariſh Prieſt to be a neceſſary branch, and merely neceſſary. This admiſſion is not ingenuous, as it ſeems to be extorted. Yet ſuppoſing it is granted without reluctance, why would you deprive him of part of that right, which he enjoys from neceſſity, and give it to a part of the community, for which, there is already ſo liberal a fund eſtabliſhed? This is without all diſpute adding to a real and a crying grievance. A grievance, the pernicious

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effects of which, were clearly predicted by many of our moſt judicious Politicians, and wiſeſt Legiſlators, at its firſt eſtabliſhment; and without a timely interference of the ruling powers, will in the courſe of a few years, bring ſuch a burthen on the landed and commercial property of this kingdom, as will not only give the final check to induſtry, but even require that exertion to emancipate ourſelves, as may probably be productive of the moſt fatal conſequences. Yet ſo prepoſſeſſed are you with your own opinions, and ſo blinded with your prejudices againſt the Church, that you would ſurreptitiouſly take, from what even our modern Deiſts acknowledge to be the leſſer evil, and inconſiderately add to which every candid and impartial perſon owns to be already the greater. The poor ceſs, which has accumulated to ſo enormous a ſum, and is ſtill increaſing with a very rapid progreſſion, will ſhortly become a more intolerable burthen than even our preſent national debt. This grievance, though real and alarming, I preſume, you deem neceſſary, as well as the Pariſh Prieſt; otherwiſe you could neither have overlooked nor forgotten ſo material a point, in your flaming rage for reformation, and whilſt you ſeem unwilling to allow your Pariſh Prieſt to vegetate upon a ſcanty pittance, you are very deſirous to promote ſloth, beggary, and indolence.

Before

Before I enter upon an examination of the arguments you have produced for the eſtabliſhment of your hypotheſis, I ſhall beg your attention to the following axioms, the juſtneſs of which, I think, no impartial, unprejudiced perſon will deny, for if the firſt be granted, the others muſt follow as an inevitable conſequence:

1. That religion is indiſpenſably neceſſary for the well being of the State.

2. That there muſt be perſons to officiate in the duties of this religion.

3. That thoſe perſons who officiate in the duties of this religion, muſt be ſupported by it, either from periodical voluntary contributions, or from ſome known and eſtabliſhed property, ſet apart for that purpoſe.

Theſe axioms, ſo dependent upon one another, ſeem to me to be ſelf-evident, and are confirmed by the concurring teſtimony of all ages, and all countries, whether we trace their progreſs amongſt the polite and enlightened Greeks, or amongſt the uncivilized and uninformed Indians.

Religion

Religion is a celeſtial emanation, imprinted in the breaſts of the whole human race by the finger of the Divinity. However obſcured by ignorance, or deformed by ſuperſtition; however corrupted by avarice, or defamed by infidelity, ſtill it breaks forth at certain intervals with undiminiſhed luſtre, and demonſtrates itſelf to be of divine original. Amidſt the idolatry and ſuperſtition of the ancient world, we may, without much ſtudy or application, trace the over-ruling power of the Divinity, even amidſt that confuſed variety of worſhip and adoration, the ridiculous devices, and abſurd inventions of a prolific imagination, directing the intelligent few, and teaching the inconſiderate many, to acknowledge that Omnipotency, which at firſt called the viſible univerſe into being, and ſtill ſupports it by his unremitting Providence. This is a propoſition plainly deducible from hiſtory that cannot be eaſily controverted; and yet, if I am not miſtaken, they allowed their officiating miniſters an ample maintenance.

If we take a view of the operations of the human mind, even in its loweſt ſtate of degradation, when its principal exertions are waſted in the chace, or in the covert devices of the nightly ſurprize; when revenge is not ſatiated with victory, or the conqueſt compleated with-

without a total extirpation, ſtill in this rude unpoliſhed ſtate of barbariſm and incivilization, we may perceive the latent traces of an internal principle, which frequently prompts them to numerous and admirable achievements, to ſuch acts of religious and enthuſiaſtic heroiſm, as almoſt exceed the bounds of credibility. Yet even here we find the Pariſh Prieſt often preſiding in their councils, and giving operation to all their meaſures; and ſhall theſe uninſtructed Indians, by the mere light of nature, put a modern Reformer to the bluſh? The alliance *between* Church and State is ſo ſacred and inviolate, that few inſtances can be produced, where the property of the former has been invaded, and its intereſts betrayed, without a manifeſt injury being done to the latter. The dependencies and relations of the one and the other being ſo minutely interwoven, that it certainly requires the niceſt diſcrimination to determine how far the ſuperior power may invade, or alienate the long eſtabliſhed rights of the inferior, without manifeſtly incurring the imputation of injuſtice. The many dreadful convulſions which have rent aſunder, nay even overturned the moſt powerful empires, which have riſen to the moſt tremendous heights, from very ſmall beginnings, are warnings that ſpeak in thunder to the inconſiderate

and precipitate, who thoughtleſsly adviſe, or haſtily incite others to execute, what may not only produce a temporary diſorder, but overwhelm thouſands in inevitable perdition.

The neceſſity of religion is ſelf-evident, and where-ever any religion is eſtabliſhed, there muſt be miniſters to officiate in the duties of it. If there be any myſteries, or any rites to be performed, they will undoubtedly be better done by perſons who have been duly and legally initiated thereto, than by others, who ſhall hardily approach the ſanctuary with unhallowed hands, and thus turn every ſacred duty into downright mummery and ridiculous oſtentation. You may ſee enough of this foolery every day in the public ſtreets, in the fields, and on the mountains; enough to deter any prudent perſon from contributing in the leaſt to promote ſuch proceedings, either by public declarations, or latent innuendos. And would you, in the warmeſt wiſh of your heart for the public weal, would you ſet thouſands of the eſtabliſhed Clergy adrift in the world, deprived of the very means of earning a competence, merely to gratify an Utopian ſcheme, or what you deem a Reform? I hope, for the ſake of humanity, you are not ſo obdurate. I likewiſe ſuppoſe you are an advocate for decency, order,

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and regularity. Taking theſe premiſes for granted, I conclude you will allow your Pariſh Prieſt, as a neceſſary branch, an independent competency. Independent he undoubtedly ought to be; for if he were to ſubſiſt upon a precarious annuity, dependent on the caprice of any powerful and opulent individual, or on the volatile humours of the giddy multitude, he muſt unavoidably exhort with the moſt frigid caution, and reprove the moſt flagrant enormities with very prudential invectives. Being thus ſituated, his faculties circumſcribed, and his inclinations thwarted, his exhortations unheeded, and his reproofs ineffectual; what good to religion or morality could reſult from the labours of a perſon, deprived of the very means, that would render him reſpectable, and his labours efficacious?

Theſe preliminary obſervations will, in all probability, be deemed by you either unneceſſary, or altogether nugatory; yet from their connection with the ſubject, and your apparent inveteracy to the whole body of the Clergy, they may perhaps be uſeful in clearing ſome doubtful opinions, and wiping away thoſe illiberal aſperſions, in which you ſo plentifully abound, to the diſhonour of common ſenſe, and the diſgrace of humanity. I ſhall now take a

curſory ſurvey of the general principles of your propoſal, which you undoubtedly deem to be fraught with ſo much latent good to the community, which for theſe many centuries has been ſo paſſive, as to endure the moſt enormous grievances, without any exertions, ſave thoſe of bigotry and fanaticiſm, to liberate itſelf. How happy muſt that people be, who have lived to ſee this day, when you with a ſtring of confident aſſertions, unſupported by arguments, and unconnected with facts, propoſe to emancipate them from all their burthens!

You propoſe "that your regulations ſhould "be accompanied with a Nullum Tempus bill, "reſpecting the claims of the Church. And "let that be followed up by another bill, "effecting the Abolition in toto, of that hate-"ful practice of Tything, which has done more "harm to the cauſe of religion, than all the "immorality of the world put together."

This is a bold aſſertion, and can only be equalled by the confidence with which it is made! How the acceptance or payment of Tythes can be ſo injurious to the cauſe of religion, remains to be demonſtrated. Since the very ingenious propoſer muſt readily acknowledge that mere poſitions, unaccompanied by

by either arguments or facts, are very unſatisfactory, and never carry one ray of conviction, to the judicious mind. I hope the injury aſſerted is no more than one of thoſe chimerical reveries, which are the certain ebullitions of undigeſted ſchemes, operating on the deciſions of an erring judgment. When a Clergyman is preſented to a living, he immediately enters upon a life eſtate of an uncertain value, ſubject to many accidental contingencies, from the deſpotiſm of ſome, and the avarice of many. Anxious to withold what they ever pay with reluctance, they readily conclude there can be no culpability in the retention of that property, which they determine to be wholly at their own diſpoſal; and being often abetted in theſe diſhoneſt practices by their ſuperiors, who promiſe them a ſtrenuous ſupport, they often proceed with that obſtinacy, that makes it morally impoſſible that the diſpute can be adjuſted in an amicable manner. The diſcovery of theſe illicit proceedings, which the injured incumbent juſtly views in a degree of criminality, will certainly prompt him to expoſtulate with the actors and ſupporters of ſuch delinquency, for which peaceable demeanor he probably receives nothing but perſonal abuſe, and open defiance; does it excite any wonder or indignation in you, that a perſon thus circumſtanced, ſhould have re-

recourſe to the laws of his country, in order to obtain that redreſs which is ſo unjuſtly denied him, by the detention of his right, and the forfeiture of his property? Muſt he, with all the paſſive tameneſs of a menial domeſtic, remain quiet, and behold a partial alienation of thoſe rights, which have been annexed to his incumbency from time immemorial, rather than appeal to thoſe laws which the Legiſlature has wiſely enacted for the puniſhment of delinquents? In this true ſtate of the caſe, ſhall he be branded with the opprobrious epithets of prophane and irreligious, ſhall he be accuſed of ſpreading immorality in the world merely for defending in a legal proceſs that little independence, which the partiality of his friends, or his own merit, hath conferred upon him; and which he is bound by all the ties of honour and honeſty, to tranſmit unimpaired and undilapidated to his ſucceſſors? Such an accuſation is as frivolous as it is unfounded.

" Let every proprietor of land be obliged to " purchaſe the Tythes of his Eſtate by a fair " valuation of their worth, at the current price " of the land: not, however, by an actual " payment of the principal ſum, but by ſub- " jecting his property to the regular diſcharge " of intereſt thereon at the rate of four per " cent."

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This propoſition for conſolidating all Tythes into a regular diſcharge of a ſimple, though inadequate payment, is very partial and intereſted. Self-intereſt and partiality are very prevalent motives, capable of ſtimulating that mind, over which they have acquired an arbitrary influence, to actions that deſerve the ſevereſt reprehenſion. This irregular innovation, that you ſo ſtrenuouſly recommend, would undoubtedly be conſentaneous to the wiſhes of many wealthy individuals, who are compelled by juſtice, by ancient ſuffrage, and by the ſtatute law of the land, to ſupport a part of the community, by what they deem a manifeſt diminution of their own annual income. Yet there are others, and I hope thoſe not a few, who pay in the ſame proportion, yet would ſcorn to coaleſce in ſuch violent proceedings, where avarice is the ſtimulant, and injuſtice the end. And though ſuch meaſures might obtain the ſanction of a legal ordinance, yet if the conceſſion were not voluntary, it muſt be compulſive, and whatever is compulſive, is the direct effect of force, and force will never confer a right, either natural or rational. Had you appropriated the ſurplus, ariſing from ſuch a regulation, to ſome charitable inſtitution, or given it to the poor ceſs as an additional fund, by which the lower claſſes of the community might

might be exempted from the payment of this heavy burthen, there had been ſome merit in the propoſal, and much good in the application. But to apply this ſurplus to the land, as a fund in perpetuity, without ſuch a reſervation, is conferring upon the landholders a ſum far more conſiderable than they at preſent pay, and appropriating to them that property of which they have diſpoſſeſſed the legal owners. But ſuppoſing all Tythes were purchaſed at a fair valuation of their worth, at the current price of land, and every eſtate to be ſubjected to the diſcharge of intereſt at four per cent. would this be any ways equivalent to the preſent payment? and would not the preſent Proprietors be conſiderable loſers, without any probable contingence to reimburſe them? And is it not more than probable, that this final diſcharge would be payed with more reluctance than even the Tythes are? This being already in poſſeſſion would be felt more immediately, and conſequently deemed a greater grievance than that which never being poſſeſſed, can only be conceived as an ideal and imaginary loſs. It is evident, beyond a contradiction, that whoever repines at a payment, which the law enforces, and which payment he never was in poſſeſſion of: ſhould the law give him poſſeſſion, and enact a regular payment, that it would be performed,

formed, not only with murmuring and regret, but even with malicious virulence, and palpable mutilation.

Suppoſing this regulation to be laſting and perpetual, if the real circulating ſpecie of this kingdom, ſhould fall in value in a proportionate degree, to what it has done this laſt century, and every neceſſary of life ſhould riſe in the ſame rapid progreſſion, what proportion would your preſent four per cent. bear to this unavoidable contingence? Beſides, four per cent. is in no wiſe adequate to the preſent yearly value; for, in all probability, were the Tythes actually ſet to ſale, they would not exceed ſeventeen or eighteen years clear income, which would be a very loſing bargain to the Incumbent, as he would inevitably loſe one third of what he at firſt poſſeſſed. Thus he would become a mere Annuitant upon a very precarious income, that muſt decreaſe every year in proportion to the decreaſe of the value of the circulating ſpecie; and be reduced, in proceſs of time, to vegetate upon a very ſcanty pittance, if not to a mere dependant on the caprice of his auditory. Whereas a perſon who enjoys an income from the produce of the land, has the faireſt opportunity allowed him of ſupporting his rank and independence with dignity,

as whatever ſtipend he poſſeſſes, fluctuates in due proportion to the actual advance or fall of the land, by which he is always enabled to meet the market on an equitable footing, in all its variety of changes. The eligibility of theſe two ſituations is not very difficult to be determined. But even admitting the poſſibility of ſuch an innovation taking place, and that you were actually the original projector, would it be conſiſtent with the principles of reaſon, with the final deciſions of an unbiaſſed judgment, or with the impartial concluſions of equity and honeſty? Can you ſuppoſe the praiſe reſulting from ſuch a propoſition, would be equivalent to the injuſtice you had brought upon thouſands, and thouſands who are yet unborn? Can you imagine the little you would perſonally acquire would ſufficiently compenſate for ſuch a general devaſtation? Let me for one moment hope that you are more diſpaſſionate and diſintereſted; and that the day is not far diſtant, when you will be heartily aſhamed of the part you have acted, and of the propoſal which you have given to the world with ſuch inconſiderate precipitancy, when inſtead of attempting to reduce the eſtabliſhed Clergy to the humiliating ſtate of abject dependence, you will generouſly ſurrender the ample

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property, that you now poſſeſs, to the Church, to which it was originally appropriated, and with all the pleaſure of a heartfelt conſciouſneſs, applaud yourſelf for the liberality of the action.

You propoſe to lop off all, what you deem unneceſſary, the other branches of this wide-ſpreading tree, and utterly aboliſh all other appointments in the Church Eſtabliſhment, ſave that neceſſary branch the Pariſh Prieſt, and the order of Prelates. This is a very awkward exception, and admitted without any conſiſtency to your general ſcheme, and abſolutely contradictory to your own aſſertions in the ſame page, where you ſay there is neither uſe, beauty, nor profit in it. If the order of Prelates be totally uſeleſs, and neither beauty, nor profit attending it, by what ſtrange paradox would you retain it? Pray be conſiſtent with yourſelf, and ſhould your propoſal undergo another impreſſion, remember to expunge ſuch abſurd contradictions, as offend by their frequency, and diſguſt by their quaintneſs. Every propoſition that is ſelf-contradictory, may excite the ſneer of ridicule, but will never operate on the unprejudiced determinations of the judgment, ſo as to produce conviction. The reader may pity when he wont contemn, and in the generous ſuppoſition of the integrity of the author,

will candidly conclude that even abſurdities might be well meant.

But is not this doctrine of yours directly applicable to every rank in life, to the Peerage and Baronetage, as well as to the Clergy? Can you advance one ſingle argument for the Abolition of the different diſtinctions in the Church, that will not militate with a double force againſt all the higher diſtinguiſhing ranks in life, and recoil upon your own head with ſuch perſevering fury, that I believe all your ingenuity will be found inſufficient to extricate yourſelf from the impending blow. Deſtroy diſtinction, and you deſtroy ſubordination, order, and decorum. If it be abſolutely neceſſary amongſt one claſs of mankind, it is in another, for the rule holds good through the whole, and is invariably ſo in the time paſt, the preſent, and the future.

That a regulation, in favour of the inferior Clergy, is indiſpenſably neceſſary, I readily acknowledge, but that your amputating ſcheme is that regulation, I as readily deny. By reducing the whole body to one ſingle claſs you would nearly annihilate all the operative powers of the human mind: by being circumſcribed within the very narrow limits of a perpetual rotation, without a poſſibility of emancipating them-

themſelves from the ſhackles of a legal priſon, without a proſpect that ſucceſſive times would add one glimpſe of content to their irkſome ſituations, without preſent eaſe, or the means that could produce it, what motive could be alledged why men of learning and abilities ſhould not then decline entering upon the functions of the Church? Deſtroy hope, and you deſtroy one of the moſt exquiſite pleaſures that can agitate the human breaſt: it is this paſſion, wiſely implanted by the finger of Omnipotence, that ſheds the ſoothing ray of kind relief; when the heavy gloom of adverſity preſſes hard, and poverty waves her iron wand, it is then that hope cheers the drooping mind, and often paints, though deluſively, the pleaſing, but imaginary, proſpects of a future day.

"The duties of whoſe ſtation being preciſely "the ſame, why ſhould they not be placed "upon a footing of equality in other reſpects? "Can any reaſon be aſſigned for a diſtinction "in this Caſe?"

Many people are carried away inconſiderately by the plauſibility of appearances, without conſidering the conſequences of them. However ſpecious this argument may look, it is certainly falſe

falſe and inconcluſive; and militates with equal force againſt every rank in ſociety. There is hardly a poſſibility of producing two inſtances wherein the duties of the Clergymen are preciſely the ſame. And it is eaſily demonſtrated, beyond the power of contradiction, that many Clergymen perform more duty in one quarter, than others in the whole year; and this difference neceſſarily ariſing from the populouſneſs of the ſeparate pariſhes. Would it in this caſe be either juſt or reaſonable, even according to your ideas of equity, to allow the one no more than the other? And ought not every man's income to be proportionate to his labour? This I think to be ſo ſelf-evident, and yet ſo oppoſite to your levelling propoſal, that they are utterly irreconcilable.

Whatever time and expence any individual has conſumed in the acquiſition of any qualification in the early part of his life, which he purpoſes to uſe for the benefit of ſociety, he ought certainly to be reimburſed, in a proportionate degree, by the profits reſulting from the application, otherwiſe he ſuffers a material injury by the loſs of his real property. Now it is a palpable fact, that the education of ſome Clergymen is much more expenſive than that of others; and that expence actually incurred from

from the hopes of a future reimburſement, which if he obtain not by the juſt exerciſe of his calling, he has an undoubted claim upon the beneficence and candour of the public. This being the caſe with all the liberal profeſſions, why ſhould the Clergy be excepted againſt? Why exempt them from the privileges of fellow citizens? And why would you deprive them of thoſe very rights you would grant to the meaneſt mechanic?

The title of Baronet renders every poſſeſſor equal in point of dignity, yet how is this dignity to be ſupported without an equality of fortune? Would you be willing, conſiſtently with your own ſcheme, voluntarily to ſacrifice a conſiderable part of your paternal inheritance, in order to enable a brother dignitary to live with the ſame ſplendour and magnificence that you do? Would you chearfully deprive your preſumptive heir, or any other collateral branch of the family, of his hereditary patrimony, merely to try the viſionary experiment of what you deem a neceſſary Reform? I think not: talking and acting are different things. Many a curious paradox is fabricated upon paper, that would be morally impoſſible to be reduced to practice. Lay your hand upon your breaſt, and in the conſciouſneſs of an upright integrity,

apply

apply the propoſition to yourſelf; when I dare venture to conclude, you immediately will acknowledge that you have been miſerably miſtaken.

" It ſtrikes at the root of pluralities; an " abuſe which calls loudly for redreſs. It cuts " off all hope and expectation of advantage " from change of place; ſo that over whatever " diſtrict a Clergyman is appointed to preſide, " there he will ſet himſelf down, I truſt, con- " tented."

It is not my buſineſs at this time to enter upon the diſcuſſion of the queſtion relative to pluralities, whether they be defenſible or not, upon the principles of equity and juſtice. Mere negatives may be oppoſed to mere affirmatives, and be perfectly conſonant to your method of reaſoning. But as this diſquiſition would lead me into a wider field of controverſy than at preſent I wiſh to enter upon, I paſs over this firſt part, not becauſe it is untenable, to examine the laſt clauſe of your propoſition.

To cut off all hope and expectation of advantage from change of place, would be not only an intolerable, but even an inhuman prohibition,

hibition, and lay the Clergy under ſuch unſufferable reſtrictions, as would render exiſtence an actual puniſhment. When a Clergyman is preſented to a living, let the ſituation be where it will, whatever inconveniences he may labour under, whatever difficulties experience, he muſt with all the paſſive tameneſs of an inanimate ſubſtance, ſet himſelf down contented; and learn to bear, becauſe there is no remedy, the inſults of petulance, and the impertinence of ſuperiority. He muſt behold, with all the apathy of an ancient Stoic, that inexpreſſible happineſs and content, the conſtant concomitants on human liberty, which thouſands of his fellow creatures enjoy without the leaſt reſtraint, but which he is for ever debarred from, by the impaſſable bounds of a parliamentary ſtatute. Many of the very criminals, who are condemned to the moſt abject ſtate of ſervitude, have this conſolation amidſt all their ſufferings, that at the expiration of an appointed term, they ſhall regain that liberty which they had deſervedly forfeited by their former irregularities. And ſhall the very criminal experience greater indulgences from the Legiſlature, than your Pariſh Prieſt, whom you yet deem to be a neceſſary branch? To what ſcale of exiſtence would you reduce the Clergy, as mere blanks in ſociety, or as mere de-

pendents on the benevolence of the affluent? Muſt a man, endowed with all the abilities that propitious nature, and a liberal education, can beſtow upon him, be deprived of the very attempt to aggrandize himſelf and poſterity, and lead a life of indigence and poverty, becauſe he inherits no property from his parent, and has moſt injudiciouſly choſen the Church for his profeſſion? And ſhall another, endowed with not one mental quality to diſtinguiſh him from the common herd, ſave being the offspring of a wealthy parent, ſhall he, by the approbation of mankind, and the deciſions of unbiaſſed reaſon, exact that ſubmiſſion, and demand that obedience which are only due to real merit, and ought never to be given to mere pomp and magnificence. There is no claſs of men in the community, whatever rank they may occupy, but would deem themſelves very materially injured, were they to be ſubject to ſuch reſtrictive prohibitions. If their induſtry in this local ſituation, were inadequate to procure them a ſubſiſtence, they are legally deprived of every method of redreſs, and muſt ſet themſelves down contented, amidſt the horrors of indigence, and the unceaſing clamours of want. The reſpectability of the Clergy ſhould ſcreen them from contempt; and the ſacredneſs of their function from the deſpicable ſhackles of tyranny. But

when

when ſome, from an ill-grounded prejudice, from an over-bearing ignorance, or from the tinſel trappings of pageantry or affluence, undertake to reduce them to a ſtate of degradation, it is no more than the ſuffrage of juſtice, if ſuch derogatory proceedings be treated with that ridicule and aſperity they ſo juſtly merit.

It is very conſiſtent with the propenſities of human nature, to remove, if poſſible, the impending evil, that hangs over our own heads, and lay it with a ſudden accumulation upon thoſe of our neighbours. Thus the conſiderable overplus, that you, ſo conſcientiouſly, wiſh to purloin from the Church, you confer with all the ſpontaneity imaginable, upon the landholders, as a perpetual fund for the relief of the poor. That the poor rates are become an almoſt inſupportable burthen, is a truth that cannot be controverted, and ought with all the ſpeed imaginable, though directed by caution, to be taken into conſideration by the Legiſlature; not for the relief of a few individuals, but of the whole community. But can no other plan be adopted than that which propoſes to deprive an uſeful and active part of the public of their juſt and legal emoluments, for the encouragement of indolence, and the ſupport of profligacy? Though I feel for the

diſtreſſes of want, and the miſeries attendant upon poverty and old age; yet it muſt be acknowledged, that the impoſtor frequently deprives the real object, and induſtry is too often a dupe to knavery and extravagance.

That this "regulation is perfectly agreeable "to the original intention of the donors. For "Tythes were firſt granted, in part, for the "maintenance of the Clergy; and in part for "the relief of the poor: ſo that originally the "Clergy were only the diſtributors of thoſe "alms," is a poſition that remains for you to eſtabliſh, by the production of the original charters, or other authentic documents. That monaſteries were receptacles for the traveller, the ſtranger, and the fatherleſs, is an abſolute certainty; but that they were enjoined to ſuch a perpetual ſcene of hoſpitality, by the expreſs injunctions of the original donors, is rather dubitable. As ſuch ſtipulations are altogether indefinite, by this hoſpitality, and a conſtant diſtribution of alms, the firſt donation might probably be inadequate to the diſcharge, then how could the diſtributors be reſponſible for the execution of the truſt repoſed in them? That ſome of the original grants, which remain to this time, enjoin this diſtribution to the poor, is certainly true; but to aſſert that they all con-

contain it, is as certainly falſe. But an aſſertion that ſupports a favourite hypotheſis, muſt be maintained even at the expence of veracity.

" At length, taking advantage of the ſupine-
" neſs of the Laity, and the debaſement of
" their minds by religious fears, they boldly
" put in their claim to the whole, as their own,
" by right divine."

The ſupineneſs, or rather, as you ought to have termed it, the barbarous ignorance, and impenetrable ſtupidity of the Laity ſome few centuries ago, cannot with any degree of juſtice or propriety be charged upon the Clergy. The weſtern parts of Europe were ſunk in inconceivable barbariſm and incivilization, in romantic folly, and ridiculous exhibitions; when every Gentleman was a warrior, and the Peaſant his retainer; when literature was held in the utmoſt contempt, and its profeſſors treated with ſovereign diſregard: in this ſcene of uncontrouled anarchy ought the Clergy to be branded with this inſidious accuſation; and the debaſement of the minds of the Laity be unjuſtly attributed to them? Certainly not. The ignorance of theſe centuries is undoubtedly a reproach to the human mind; but the many cauſes that conſpired to perpetuate that ignorance,

rance, you have ſpontaneouſly miſtaken or overlooked. The few ſparks of learning that at certain intervals irradiated thoſe dark ages, proceeded from the religious houſes; and we are under inviolable obligations to theſe recluſes, for preſerving the ſmall remains of literature from ſinking into an abyſs of obſcurity, and the devouring vortex of a long and dark oblivion.

Notwithſtanding your contemptuous ſneer, and your indignant ſcoffs, at the claim of right divine, which continued unconteſted through a long ſucceſſion of ages; and any attempt to develope its origin, even in the Chriſtian Church, muſt be inevitably loſt in the inexplicable mazes of antiquity; ſtill it continues as valid and vigorous as though it had never been attacked by the ſublimating genius of ſo redoubtable a Reformer. The ebullitions of rancour, and the miſchievous, though futile, attacks of ill-nature, are ſeldom correſpondent with the hopes from which they originated, but generally die, and are deſervedly forgotten, with the innoxious confuſion which they at firſt occaſioned. This, I preſume, nay even prognoſticate, will be the certain deſtiny of all your laborious, but miſtaken, patriotiſm.

Though

Though you reprobate with the utmoſt indignation the claim of Tythes, by right divine, the following obſervations may not be unworthy of your notice, although you ſeem to be rather inimical to any thing that has the leaſt affinity to argumentation.

If the Levitical law be of divine original, then every part of that law, of which the whole is compoſed, is likewiſe of the ſame divine original. Therefore Tythes, that is, thoſe kinds of produce of the lands appropriated to the maintenance of the Clergy, being a diſtinct part, and expreſsly enjoined to be paid to the Prieſthood for their maintenance, are certainly held by their poſſeſſors by right divine. For I cannot conceive how you can abſtract a particular part from a complete whole, without doing a material injury to that whole from which it is abſtracted; and let the original of the whole be what it will, whether human or divine, the part abſtracted muſt incontrovertibly have the ſame. Therefore, if you acknowledge the divine Legation of Moſes, you muſt likewiſe acknowledge that the Prieſthood hold their Tythes by the command of the ſame Divinity, that deputed and taught this great Legiſlator to frame his admirable code of morality. In my opinion this conſequence is inevitable.

The

The claim of common right ſeems particularly to excite your ſpleen. I do not wonder at it. For he who admits of no claims, either divine or human, muſt be expected to be a little ſplenetic, when he ſpeaks of one that is ſomewhat of a vague and ambiguous interpretation. But what has been enjoyed from time immemorial, whether by a ſingle individual, or by any claſs of mankind, this continued poſſeſſion, without interruption, muſt undoubtedly conſtitute a legal tenure. Therefore, all Tythes, that are held even by this tenure of common right, are as much the real property of your obnoxious Pariſh Prieſt, as if he enjoyed them by an immediate grant from the Crown, your fountain of property. I think it is to be regretted, that you happen to be the ſport of the preſent age, and were not ſent to enlighten our hemiſphere more than a century ago, in the laughing, but licentious, days of Charles the Second, in whoſe court, and at whoſe ear, you muſt have cut a conſpicuous figure in the memorable work of reſumption; and then the Corporations had not ſuffered alone, for you, by the application of your infallible noſtrums, would have pointed out more laſting and lucrative advantages.

That

That impoſitions exiſted formerly, and may exiſt among the eſtabliſhed Clergy of the preſent day, is a probable fact, that cannot eaſily be controverted. But whatever the impoſitions of former times were, their ſucceſſors in the Church cannot with equity be reſponſible for them; as it is unjuſtifiable to brand with obloquy any claſs of men merely for following the ſame profeſſion which their predeceſſors followed four or five centuries ago, and who, for the commiſſion of ſome irregularities, amply deſerved the ſevereſt reprehenſion. Neither ought the whole body to be animadverted upon, for the fooliſh conduct of ſome exceptionable characters, who are a ſhame to the ſacred function, and a reproach to that *Miniſtry* which they have ſo impudently and audaciouſly aſſumed. The exception of ſome few individuals militates nothing againſt the whole body, no more than the perverſion of a laudable inſtitution does againſt the inſtitution itſelf; and how eaſily the beſt of inſtitutions may be perverted to the very worſt of purpoſes, needs only to be mentioned in order to be acknowledged. For cunning, hypocriſy, and *baſeneſs*, are as much the depraved, as prudence, fortitude, and temperance, are the exalted, operations of the human mind; and when the former

are not duly regulated by the latter, virtue and religion are but feeble barriers to their irreſiſtible impetuoſity. This is but too evident by the many notorious inſtances that daily occur; and were it not for the pious admonitions, and friendly remonſtrances, of the officiating Clergy, it is difficult to determine how far the evil propenſities of the age might ſtimulate to the commiſſion of greater enormities.

This being demonſtrative, it is no wonder that even a good man is neceſſitated to have recourſe to the laws of his country for the protection of his property, againſt a daring peccability, a vindictive, and perpetual determination to retain what inviolable juſtice gives to another. This does not vilify the *Miniſters of Peace*, or render the *Preachers of Self-Denial* either contemptible or avaricious. The diſhonour redounds upon the head of the aggreſſor, who ſacrilegiouſly withholds, either what he himſelf, or his impious progenitor, avariciouſly alienated from the long-eſtabliſhed revenues of the Church.

I ſhall readily give a cheerful acquieſcence to any propoſal that may contribute to the relief of neceſſity, by diſpelling the gloomy horrors of

of want, and the ghaſtly throes of a never-ceaſing poverty. This is pleading the cauſe of humanity, by ſmoothing the brow of care, and wiping away the trickling tear that gliſtens on the pallid cheek of ſorrow. The many inſtances that frequently come under the cognizance of the leaſt inquiſitive obſerver, where many a worthy, virtuous, and reſpectable family, is ſuddenly hurled by the death of an endearing huſband, and indulgent father, from a ſtate of happineſs, content, and plenty, into that of unrelenting miſery and want, are really afflictive, and move the keeneſt pangs of tender ſenſibility. Let us go together for once, and take a view of this houſe of mourning. See there, the fair diſconſolate, pleaſure has fled from her eye, and the roſe bud dies upon her cheek: that cheek where once played the ſmile of health, is now a prey to the pinings of ſorrow. Laſt night with tottering ſteps and ſlow, ſhe followed the partner of her early joys to the dank margin of the yawning grave, ſhe ſaw him laid in his long and ſilent *reſt*; a companion for the worm: ſhe ſaw the mouldering earth, and heard the hollow ſound upon his clay-cold breaſt; ſhe ſaw and heard no more; for in the ſtruggle to pronounce a laſt farewel, her grief ſtopt utterance, and ſinking nature yielded to

the unequal conflict.—Now, ſee there, the widowed mourner, brooding over her woes, and ſighing upon the recollection of the many happy ſcenes that bleſſed her better days, whilſt theſe little innocent prattlers, unaccuſtomed to a mother's ſorrow, frequently liſp out their wants, and enquire for that father who now ſleeps in his long-enduring tomb. Alive to every anguiſh, and tortured with the thoughts of ſudden and approaching miſery, that may deprive her of the means to procure her children a ſubſiſtence, ſhe ſheds the unalleviating tear of pity, and vainly attempts to huſh their piteous cries. And are you really willing to alleviate this diſtreſs? I know you are; and may every attempt of this nature meet with deſerved ſucceſs.

You propoſe to ſecure the independence of the Bench of Biſhops, and yet can perform it by no other method, than by the arbitrary one, of putting an end to tranſlations. Even admitting the practicability of your ſcheme, that makes them all equal in reſpect of emolument, how many cauſes may conſpire to form the wiſh for a change of ſituation, or render the preſent very irkſome and diſagreeable? Is there nothing tyrannical and deſpotic under ſuch a reſtriction, that

that limits a perſon to a certain local ſituation, without a poſſibility of redreſs, but by ſacrificing thoſe advantages, which his education, and diſtinguiſhed office entitle him to? Any Reform had much better be cruſhed in the embrio, that cannot be put in execution, without violently depriving one ſingle individual of thoſe invaluable privileges which he enjoys as his birth right, and which he cannot forfeit but by a tranſgreſſion of the eſtabliſhed polity of his country. This doctrine ſeems oppoſite to your political creed, yet it is the boaſt of every Engliſhman; and I hope it will be of long duration.

"In order ſtill more to ſmooth the way to "this neceſſary Reform, let the Ladies be en-"liſted on our ſide, by giving them the title "and rank of their huſbands."

This compliment to the fair part of the creation, ſo ſpecious and ſo plauſible, is a downright inſult to their underſtandings. After ſo material an injury done to their huſbands, by a deprivation of the greateſt part of their property, you propoſe to enliſt the wives under your banners, by holding out the tinſel trappings of pageantry and rank, as a ſufficient com-

compenſation for an irreparable loſs. Whatever the intoxicating powers of flattery may accompliſh, when properly directed againſt ignorance and ambition, may be difficult to determine; but certainly there is no ſmall degree of aſſurance, if not effrontery, in propoſing ſuch an inſult to the intellectual faculties of ſo amiable a part of ſociety, as to ſuppoſe them perfectly ſatisfied with the mere exterior of rank and dignity, after you have *ſurreptitiouſly pilfered* the very means that could render this rank and dignity honourable and truly reſpectable. The propoſal is ſpecious, but really ridiculous and inſulting. Though you ſeem to have a very degrading opinion of the intellectual powers of the fair ſex, and place them in the humiliating rank of children, who are pleaſed with the mere tinkling of baubles, for which they owe you many obligations; yet you are compelled to acknowledge that they are neceſſary to ſmooth the way to this Reform. This acknowledgement, if not extorted, and given with reluctance, ſeems rather contradictory to the main tenure of the propoſition, which ſuppoſes them ſuch weak and ſimple Beings, as to be diverted with the airy ſound of an empty name, yet concludes them neceſſary to influence their huſbands, and gain

their

their acquieſcence to this chimerical Reform. There is certainly ſome ſolidity of underſtanding, and ſome power of penetration among the Bench of Biſhops, that could not be ſo eaſily prevailed upon, as to reſt contented under ſuch a regulation, gulled and duped by the artleſs pleaſantries of their newly dignified Ladies. By ſuch a ſuppoſition, and it is evidently yours from the context, you place both their intellectual capacities in a very humble ſcale.

" The advantages that will accrue to the " ſtate, to the cauſe of religion, and the peace " of ſociety, by the Abolition of Tythes, and " the independence of the Biſhops," are as problematical, as the wildeſt reveries of any viſionary can conceive them to be. What advantages can actually reſult to the ſtate, when you annex the overplus of the Revenues of the Church, to the Land, to relieve thoſe who are already the beſt enabled to ſupport the burthen? Will the addition of real eſtate to a few opulent individuals, confer any real advantages to the community at large? Mere paradox: for it is an acknowledged fact, that the more landholders there are in any ſociety, and their property regularly parcelled out to laborious tenants, is of much more real utility, than when that property is in poſſeſſion of a wealthy few. The wider

you

you extend the diſtribution, the farther you diffuſe the benefits accruing from induſtry, and ſpread its concomitants, wealth, and peace, among all ranks of ſociety. How the cauſe of religion is impeded, and its beneficial effects fruſtrated, by the preſent government of the Church, is rather difficult to be conceived; as the revenues ariſe principally from thoſe, whoſe patrimony or affluence enables them to bear it, whilſt the induſtrious poor may almoſt plead a total exemption. The diſagreeable contentions that ſometimes ariſe, relative to the payment of Tythes, frequently originate with the Landholder, and not with the Tenant, who only moves mechanically by the covert operations of the former, prompting him to retain what the laws of his country have repeatedly decided to be the property of another. Thus ſtimulated by ambition, and excited by avarice, it would be very impolitic to entruſt thoſe with the ſole payment, who already ſee a part paid with ſo much reluctance, though it never were in their poſſeſſion, and conſequently not their property.

The Biſhops can already boaſt of an independence without your liberality. It would have been candid and ingenuous to have aſſigned your reaſons for retaining the Right Reverend Bench, after you have poſitively aſſerted that

all

all other orders, ſave the Pariſh Prieſt, are totally unneceſſary. The chaſm, that would be left, after lopping off all the intermediate branches, could produce no real good, and might much poſitive evil; as a juſt gradation, in the government of the Church, may probably be as neceſſary as either in the political, the moral, or the natural world. The Church, being one of the three eſtates of the realm, requires as much order, regularity, and ſubordination, as are conſiſtent to ſupport its authority, vigour, and duration, in a juſt degree with its other collateral branches, that you are ſo ſtrenuous to aggrandize.

It is rather preſumptuous even to wiſh that you might have all good men on your ſide; for what good man would voluntarily ſubſcribe to the performance of injuſtice, and probably to his own immediate loſs, the injury of his friends, and the forfeiture of his rank and reſpectability which he already holds in ſociety. This would be a ſacrifice of true patriotiſm, and worthy of the utmoſt political neceſſity; but ſince no ſuch neceſſity exiſts, you ought to have prefaced your propoſal, with a ſpontaneous reſignation of thoſe ſpoils of the Church, which you at preſent retain, and to which, as a Layman, you can have no legal claim. As Tythes

were originally granted for the maintenance of the Clergy, and theſe Tythes having been alienated by an arbitrary ſtretch of authority, natural juſtice demands that they ought to be ſurrendered to the original proprietors, from whom they were *ſo ſurreptitiouſly* taken. But to be capable of this detention, to exact the payment of the utmoſt farthing in the collection, and then to withhold the little pittance that your Pariſh Prieſt enjoys, neither adds to your benevolence, nor brightens your humanity.

In your poſtſcript, you apprehend Dr Watſon to be miſtaken in his calculation of the revenues of the Church. It is no part of the character of the learned Biſhop to take things upon truſt. His judgment is accurate, and his integrity unimpeached; he is every way qualified for ſo complicated an inveſtigation, and from his ſituation in life enabled to make thoſe reſearches which are abſolutely neceſſary to form an adequate idea upon ſo complex a ſubject. Your ſuppoſition that his calculations are neither accurate nor recent, is paying no compliment to his underſtanding, however you may affect to do ſo. His Letter to the Archbiſhop of Canterbury being upon ſo important a ſubject as the Reform of the Church Revenue, he would be very cautious in aſſigning a temerarious value to the

the preſent income, which might be controverted by other calculators equally expert, and contribute to invalidate his whole ſcheme. He calculates the preſent revenue to be one million and a half; but upon what data do you calculate it to be two millions and a half. The learned Biſhop muſt be ſuppoſed to know the improvements in the *parts of his nativity*, and to regulate his calculations proportionate thereto.

The concluſion which you boldly draw, That the Crown is the fountain of all property, I hope will be controverted by every Engliſhman, who is a friend to his country, and the preſent conſtitution. Such doctrine may be very well calculated for the meridian of Paris, Madrid, or Conſtantinople, where the very freedom of ſpeech on political diſcuſſions is abſolutely forbid, and the only road to preferment is by abject flattery, and baſe compliance; but a Briton, who prides himſelf upon his liberty, his property, and his birthright, ought to bluſh at the very ſuppoſition of ſuch a concluſion; and not confidently to publiſh it as his political creed. That the King, as executive part of the Legiſlative body, is abſolutely neceſſary in our mixed government, I readily acknowledge; but that he is the fountain of all the property in the kingdom, I as readily deny. The incon-

trollable admiſſion of this axiom would render the Britiſh Monarch as abſolute as any Prince in Europe, and never reſponſible to the great body of the people for any arbitrary and oppreſſive meaſures, which either his own caprice, or the unwarrantable deſpotiſm of a favourite Miniſter, might dictate. The people may complain, but before what tribunal ſhall they plead their cauſe?

* There are three principal powers in the ſtate, with a variety of others ſubordinate to them. The power of the people, the power of the conſtitution, and the power of the law. The people muſt evidently be the firſt power, for without the people there could be neither conſtitution nor law. The conſtitution is that compact or agreement, originally entered into between the governors and the governed, when the people made a voluntary ſurrender of part of their liberty and property, for the ſake of internal quiet, and to repel external violence, and thus came under the legal denomination of ſubjects. The law is that power which originates from, or is the immediate conſequence of the other two; and is indiſpenſably neceſſary for

* See the Earl of Abingdon's Letter to Edmund Burke, Eſq.

for the equal diſtribution of juſtice; a curb to the ambitious, and a reſtraint to the oppreſſor. The crown, therefore, being only a ſubordinate power, and poſſeſſing nothing beyond a delegated authority, ſubject to the law, and reſponſible for any illegal and arbitrary proceedings, can never reaſonably be deemed the fountain of all property. The parliament, in which is veſted the legiſlative power, is certainly equivalent to the crown, in which is veſted only the power of execution, or giving effect to what the former has already approved of; and cannot legally act, in one ſingle inſtance, when ſeparated from, or in direct oppoſition to, the other collateral power. This poſition is irrefragable, though political neceſſity may ſometimes plead an excuſe for an illegal tranſgreſſion, and too fatal experience teaches us, how difficult and dangerous it is to overſtep thoſe juſt bounds, which reaſon and juſtice have ſet up as the final bars to ambition, and the terror of deſpotic ſway.

In tracing our excellent conſtitution to its original, it would be injudicious, nay even venal, to ſtop at the conqueſt, an æra which every Engliſhman ought always to view with a jealous eye, when liberty was trampled on, and property unwarrantably ſeized; when every

every tie, both ſacred and moral, was held in defiance; when every duty bowed before tyrannic oppreſſion, and the whole body of the people reduced to the moſt ſervile ſtate of vaſſalage; yet this is the memorable æra from which you date the Crown to be the fountain of property; which power it has unalterably retained even to this day. Did you never read of ſuch a record as Magna Charta?

In taking a retroſpect of antiquity, in viewing our venerable anceſtors in their woods, and in their foreſts, when war was their profeſſion, and their whole ſubſiſtence the produce of the chace, when no diſtinct property was claimed, but a community of goods was enjoyed; when the land was uncultivated, nay even undivided, and its produce both little and precarious, where was the Crown, your fountain of property? Yet even in this rude and uncivilized ſtate we may inveſtigate ſome latent traces, and develope ſome kindred veſtiges, of our favourite conſtitution, the envy and admiration of mankind; theſe by a regular progreſs have kept an equal pace, with the improvements in literature and government, and have gradually riſen to the glorious excellence in which we now, and have long enjoyed them, and may their duration be coeval with the wreck of time.

That

That the crown is not the fountain of property, is a poſition perfectly conſentaneous to the general opinion of mankind, from the many ſtruggles for liberty, the many attempts to ſhake off the yoke of oppreſſion, and the unceaſing murmur of depreſſed nature over the greateſt part of the globe. It is unnatural, and contradictory to common ſenſe, even to ſuppoſe that millions of people were created to be the mere ſport of a ſingle individual, endowed with no ſuperior qualities, and who has no better claim to this exalted ſituation than that his father enjoyed it before him. The firſt man who ſtuck a pole in the earth, and ſaid, this is my property, ought to have been compelled by the united force of his companions, to have totally relinquiſhed his arbitrary claim; or to have been purſued by them, as the ſavage lion of the foreſt, for his nightly depredations on their inoffenſive flocks, till he had been exterminated as an offence to the human race.

The crown being only a ſubordinate power, and enjoying a delegated authority, and that authority delegated by the people, the only original proprietors of all property, it is improbable that they, out of an inconſiderate love for monarchy, would alienate for ever all their rights,

rights, privileges, and properties, and become mere dependents upon its benevolence for their happineſs and welfare. The happineſs and welfare of a people, when totally dependent upon the will of the Monarch, are very unſtable and precarious, liable to innumerable obſtacles, and obnoxious to all the whimſical verſatility of over-bearing deſpotiſm. This unnatural vaſſalage, into which almoſt the whole human race have voluntarily plunged, deſerves to be perpetuated, ſince by neglecting the means of emancipation, which they every hour enjoy, they tamely ſubmit to the yoke, and willingly drag that chain which the very brute of the foreſt ſubmits to with the utmoſt impatience. Fortitude is a virtue, but never ſo praiſe-worthy as in a reſolute exertion, and manly perſeverance.

That the Crown is not the fountain of property, I *contend* upon every principle, whether it enjoys its power by delegation or by conqueſt. When a man, ſtimulated by ambition, wiſhes to trample upon the unalienable rights of his fellow creatures, and actually accompliſhes that wiſh by an arbitrary exertion of power, in ſubjugating his equals, and reducing them to a ſtate of ſervitude; even this caſe, ſuppoſes a prior right in the people, of which being diſpoſſeſſed, they are compelled, however reluctantly,

tantly to ſubmit to the will of a tyrant. This being continued for a ſeries of ages, it may in ſome caſes be very hazardous to call that power in queſtion, by which ſuch an unlimited authority was at firſt eſtabliſhed. But conqueſt confers no natural right: if it did, any man who was ſtronger than his neighbour may deprive him of his property, nay even his liberty, and his life, and plead for his unwarrantable procedure, the ſtupid privilege of power. The one only acts upon a leſſer, the other on a larger ſcale: they are equally iniquitous.

That "the Church has no inherent title to "Tythes," is a poſition that may be controverted, and probably overturned. If religion be actually neceſſary for the welfare of the community, which is a fact that cannot, with any probability of argument, be denied, this religion muſt be inſtituted, and grafted with the firſt principles of the government of which it is ſo eſſential a part. Wherefore this religion being coeval with the government, and really eſſential to its exiſtence, it is as abſolutely neceſſary that the officiating miniſters of this religion have a competency for their ſupport, as thoſe who are immediately employed in the buſineſs of the ſtate. Prior to this original conſtitution all are ſuppoſed to be upon an equality.

Upon this ſuppoſition ſo much is granted by the whole body of the people, for the ſupport of the government, and ſo much for the ſupport of the Church; by which grant it has undoubtedly an inherent title to what is granted, whether it be in land, or in the annual produce of land, and ought to enjoy it without any diminution, either from avarice, or unbounded authority. This compact is coeval, if not primæval, with the Crown, your fountain of property.

" The poſſeſſions of the Church are derived " from the bounty of others, the donors are " therefore more properly the fountain."

Is not this contradictory to your favourite hypotheſis, of the Crown being the fountain of property? Theſe two aſſertions, acting with an equal force, muſt conſequently deſtroy each other. There can no more be two original fountains of property, than there can be two firſt neceſſary cauſes: the idea is not only contradictory, but really abſurd. If the Crown be the fountain of property, and the ſubjects nothing more than dependents upon its bounty, whatever property it grants, may in time revert to it again; ſo all ſecondary privileges that are conferred by thoſe who enjoy the firſt grant, can

can never annihilate that authority, which is poſſeſſed by the firſt power. Therefore thoſe donors are only ſecondary agents, ſubordinate to the firſt power, reſponſible for all alienations, and can never enjoy that authority you here aſcribe to them. This aſſertion is contradictory, and conſequently falſe.

If it be more prudent, as you manifeſtly acknowledge, to wait the ſlow, but ſafe and certain operations of time, to remedy your imaginary evils, of what uſe is your propoſal, and with what view did you publiſh it? One part of it runs diametrically contradictory to the other; and the moſt palpable confuſion pervades the whole. Where there is a chain of propoſitions derived from ſome given data, and every ſucceeding propoſition plainly deducible from the firſt, where the whole is connected by the moſt obvious ſimplicity, and regular coherence, it is plainly calculated to produce conviction, and lead the enquiring mind through every intricacy of inveſtigation, that the nature of the ſubject may require.

But in a plan of Reform, where one part of a paragraph contradicts another, and the whole is compoſed of the moſt diſcordant materials, at enmity amongſt themſelves, without a poſſi-

bility of reconciliation, can any real good result from ſuch a chaotic maſs? Impoſſible. Conſiſtency is abſolutely more neceſſary than argumentation, for the former may give ſome plauſibility to a bad cauſe, when all the ſophiſtry of the latter may be detected by a very little attention. I confeſs I admire your wiſdom in propoſing to wait the operations of time; they will perform more, and to more purpoſe, than all the chimerical ſchemes that ever entered the head of any paradoxical projector. The operations of time are ſlow, yet certain, producing events in that order and regularity, as juſtly excite our wonder and aſtoniſhment; but the operations of the human mind, when prompted by paſſion, and directed by prejudice, burſt forth in ſuch convulſions, and glaring eccentricities, as raiſe the pangs of ſenſibility, and the ſoothing ſighs of ſilent contempt.

" It remains with you, therefore, my Reve-
" rend Friends, to ſhew your right. Prove
" your poſſeſſion. Make it appear that you
" have done ſo, and I will anſwer for it there is
" no Layman amongſt us, who has either ho-
" neſty or common ſenſe that will reſiſt the
" claim."

The challenge, though uncandid, is very ingenuous. The right is already demonſtrated, and

and it will be no difficult matter to prove the poſſeſſion*, from a variety of inſtances, wherein that poſſeſſion which has received the venerable ſanction of paſt ages, has not only been openly diſputed, but even violently and illegally prohibited by perſons who would take it as an irreparable injury, were you to call either their honeſty or common ſenſe in queſtion.

That the Church has been in poſſeſſion of property ſince the time of the Reformation, and which it has now loſt, is a fact that cannot eaſily be controverted, and requires neither argument nor authority to eſtabliſh it. A variety of cauſes, both political and civil, has conſpired to alienate that property, and convey it into the hands

* There is a certain Gentleman in the county of Northumberland, and one of his Majeſty's Juſtices of the Peace, who has for a number of years perſonally *withheld*, and by his authority prohibited, ſeveral ſpecies of Tythes, that had long been accuſtomed to be paid to the Vicar of his Pariſh. As this aſſertion may be deemed vague and unſatisfactory, I ſhall enumerate ſome particulars that put it beyond a doubt. In his vicinity there is a little village, moſtly his own property, and chiefly inhabited by fiſhermen. From time immemorial every boat belonging to this village, and employed in the fiſhery, paid Tythe every tide it ſailed; but of late, this worthy Magiſtrate, by his inſinuations and authority hath prevented the payment totally, as not a ſingle perſon in the village, at preſent, pays Tythes of fiſh; though there are numbers exiſting who paid to both the late and the preſent Vicar.

hands of the Laity, the recovery of which has been the ſource of ſo much litigation. But even you muſt acknowledge, that had any part of your paternal inheritance been unjuſtly alienated by ſome of your progenitors, you would not have heſitated to have made a formal claim; and upon refuſal of immediate reſtoration, would have commenced a legal proceſs for the re-

I ſhall adduce another praiſe-worthy inſtance, in the perſon of this enlightened Magiſtrate: A few years ago he let a conſiderable part of his eſtate to a certain tenant. The tenant, by experience, found the land was very well calculated for the production of rape. Accordingly he ſowed a certain portion of his farm with this article, and reaped a very plentiful crop. This Gentleman's Eſtate paid a ſmall modus for hay and graſs. The Vicar calling one day accidentally upon this Gentleman, he told him, in the courſe of their converſation, that he would then pay him the modus if he would ſign the receipt, which he produced, and which he had wrote for the purpoſe. The Vicar ſuſpecting no colluſion inadvertently ſigned the receipt without reading it. Some time after, being in diſcourſe with the Juſtice, he told him he expected the Tythe of the rape, when he was immediately informed that he had already ſigned away his right, for the rape was included in the receipt for hay and graſs. Amazed at this information, the Vicar demanded a ſight of the receipt, which was peremptorily denied him. Some neighbouring Gentlemen ſaw the receipt, when this upright Magiſtrate had, with an audacity unparalleled, inſerted, for hay, graſs, *and rape*, as uſual; though it is an unconteſted fact, that that land had produced no crops of rape, ſince he came to the eſtate. He yet denies the claim, and publicly boaſts of the deception. Theſe are both facts, and well known for their notoriety. If they be falſely or miſtakenly miſrepreſented, let the Gentleman here alluded to, come forth, and juſtify himſelf on the principles either of honeſty or common ſenſe.

recovery of what you knew to be your own. And would you be ſo unjuſt, or ſo unreaſonable, as to deny that redreſs to another, which you deem abſolutely neceſſary for your own welfare? Or what particular privilege can you plead, that ſo honourable an exemption ſhould be extended to you? A change of caſes and circumſtances frequently carries more conviction than all the arguments that can be adduced in ſupport of any propoſition whatſoever. For when intereſt blinds the underſtanding, and prejudice warps the judgment, argument only ſerves to irritate, and often miſlead the partial into the inextricable mazes of confirmed ſtupidity, and thoughtleſs miſapprehenſion.

The human mind has a peculiar pleaſure in action, its powers are various, and its exertions inexhauſtible. Thus it ſeldom happens, that either philoſophy or religion, nay even in combination, have that influence over it as to allure it to a paſſive compliance, whenever it conceives itſelf to lye under wrong or depreſſion. To this ſource, the depreſſion of the human mind, we are chiefly indebted for the many illuſtrious actions and productions that add a never-fading glory to antiquity; and crown ſome æras of modern times with immortality. It is no eaſy taſk to diveſt the human mind of its keeneſt ſen-

ſenſibilities, and render it a mere paſſive ſubſtance; for whenever it ſuppoſes an injury, or actually feels a depreſſion, it immediately forms an attempt to liberate itſelf, and ſhake off that yoke which injuſtice or oppreſſion hath conſpired to lay upon it. And would you diveſt your Pariſh Prieſt of thoſe very feelings which are common to humanity, by rendering him even inſenſible to wrong? Have not moſt of the actions that have been litigated been inſtituted upon authentic documents, which eſtabliſh it beyond a doubt that many of the modern claims are not novel? And is it not evident from hence, what is now claimed has been *ſurreptitiouſly pilfered* from the Church? The very payment of thoſe Tythes in many parts of England, where they always were paid, and never controverted, is a ſubſtantial proof that in other parts they have at certain times been purloined, and are at preſent as ſtrenuouſly denied. Therefore it is no more than common juſtice for a Clergyman, wherever ſuch documents or proofs are extant, to attempt a recovery of what his predeceſſors have been unjuſtifiably deprived. If he have the means he certainly incurs a degree of criminality in tamely ſubmitting to an injuſtice. He owes it to himſelf, he owes it to poſterity.

"To

" To reclaim all that part of Tythe property, " which is now in the hands of the Laity," is a determination that can never enter into the thoughts of any man, or body of men; though it muſt be confeſſed that they hold it by a very ſtrange tenure. As Tythes were originally granted for the maintenance of the Clergy, by what perverſion, or conſtruction of this grant, can the Laity be ſaid to be entitled to them? The Clergy were to earn the poſſeſſion by the performance of the functions of the eſtabliſhed religion, but by the performance of what duties are the Laity to enjoy theſe poſſeſſions? It is abſurd, it is contradictory to common ſenſe, even to attempt a juſtification of the deſpotic and vindictive means, by which they were alienated from the Church, and conveyed into Lay hands. Nothing but the moſt intereſted motives could induce any man to offer to the world a palliation of proceedings which juſtice abhors, and humanity deteſts. The defenders of ſuch flagrant culpability, only ſay that in ſimilar circumſtances they would be guilty of the ſame crime.

" When was it known that the landholder " was mounted ſo high on the pinnacle of pre-

" ſumption, as to venture to lay claim to that " which is not contained in his grant? There " is no inſtance of the kind."

It is altogether inconceivable to what lengths an aſſuming confidence will proceed, even in direct oppoſition to daily experience. For when a favourite hypotheſis is to be ſupported, the moſt inconſiſtent aſſertions, the moſt contradictory arguments, are thought neceſſary, if not to convince, at leaſt to miſlead. The many examples of paſt years of landholders putting in a claim, and even attempting to wreſt, by a legal proceſs, the property of other landholders from them, are too recent to need a recapitulation. That ſuch inſtances have come under your own cognizance, muſt be admitted, however you plead ignorance, in order to be as conſiſtent as you can; and to make your viſionary ſcheme of Reform even palatable to thoſe who are moſt immediately concerned. But juſtice needs no meretricious ſupport; her balance is her beſt emblem; deprive her of that, and you deprive her of exiſtence.

You ſay " there is no proof ſet up, no, not " even the pretence or ſhadow of a proof of " former poſſeſſion." This is actually a falſe allegation, and tantamount to the confidence with

with which it is made. It is a well known fact that almoſt all the claims of the Church, which you deem novel, and which you boldly affirm were never heard of before, are founded upon official documents*, which have been preſerved from the violence and depredation that pilfered its property of more real value. I will not be ſo illiberal as to ſuppoſe you made this affirmation at the expence of your veracity; I will rather conclude, though you ſpent ſome time in the inveſtigation of the matter, you have totally overlooked the very foundation upon which thoſe claims are founded. Upon a review of the ſubject, it is hoped, you will be ſo ingenuous as to make this acknowledgement. It is no degradation to the underſtanding of any man, to acknowledge a fault, much leſs an overſight; but it is an additional link to his candour, and may confirm him more in the

 good

* In the pariſh of Bothal, in the county of Northumberland, there are at preſent authentic documents, above one hundred years old, which prove to a demonſtration that the land, belonging to the Duke of Portland, once paid Tythe; and moreover was the only land in that pariſh that did pay for a certain time. That very land which did once pay Tithe, and was the only land then that did pay, now pays none, though all the other land in the pariſh pays at preſent. How this tranſmutation was accompliſhed is uncertain, though it appears rather ſuſpicious; and probably a minute enquiry would redound little to the credit or integrity of the Landholder.

good opinion of all parties, than all the rancour and malevolence, the aſperity and abuſe, that can fall from a vindictive pen dipped in the blackeſt gall. The production that is dictated by revenge, and proſecuted by virulence, is ſeldom productive of any beneficial effects. The diſpaſſionate and impartial view it with an eye of pity; whilſt the intelligent and enlightened commiſerate the man whoſe paſſions are ſo refractory as to be capable of abuſive weakneſs.

It is certainly a wide ſtretch for the moſt conſummate effrontery to alledge, that all decrees which have been given in favour of the Church are founded in error, and liable to reverſal. To ſuppoſe that every learned Judge, and impartial Jury, before whom theſe important cauſes have been tried, and by them decided, could be ſo prejudiced by falſe appearances, and biaſſed by improper motives, that they were utterly incapacitated to determine betwixt right and wrong, betwixt truth and falſity; and that all their deciſions were founded in error, is as viſionary and chimerical as the wildeſt exploits of the illuſtrious Knight of La Mancha. The Gentlemen who ſat as ſpecial Jurymen, to decide upon the merits of thoſe cauſes, had their own properties to defend againſt all incroachments whatſoever, and can even

even you ſuppoſe that thoſe men of landed eſtates could be ſo blind to their own intereſt, and ſo void of all integrity, as to form a combination in delivering their verdict, to deprive themſelves and their poſterity of part of their real property? Abſurdities ought always to be clothed in ſpecious apparel, but when they are ſo bare-faced, ſerious argument is thrown away upon them, and they ought to be treated with that ridicule they ſo amply deſerve.

Your reference to doomſday is poor and pitiful indeed, derogatory to an Engliſhman, and inſulting to every friend of liberty. The argument drawn from it is worthy of him who made it. This ſurvey was made by the command of an arbitrary tyrant, whoſe will was his law; and whoſe pleaſure his prevailing paſſion; who depopulated whole pariſhes, and threw them into barren waſtes; who deprived all the ancient Engliſh nobility of their paternal eſtates, and conferred them upon his needy followers; and to perpetuate the vaſſalage of the nation, he left this book among the archives of his capital, as a glorious archetype to all future deſpots.

It is from this celebrated foundation you draw your no leſs celebrious axiom, viz. That the Crown is the fountain of property. This imperious

rious Monarch believed in the ſame doctrine, and left it upon record, for the improvement of future ages; how much you have profited by the peruſal you announce to the public, who will hardly regret that you were not born a Monarch.

That ſelf-taught ſcurrility, in which you are ſo converſant, ſhews how ſenſible you are of the weakneſs of your cauſe, and the futility of your arguments. To attempt to ſupport a bad cauſe, by perſonally abuſing the Clergy of paſt ages, as well as the preſent, is no demonſtration of the ſoundneſs of your underſtanding, nor any proof of your benevolence and candour. To ſtigmatize your Chriſtian teachers with the odious terms of fools and knaves, is doing an injury to common ſenſe, and throwing the obloquy of paſſive obedience on our progenitors, who ſubmitted to be taught in all religious and moral duties, by a claſs of men altogether incapacitated for ſuch an important charge. This imputation bears hard upon the human ſpecies, by ſuppoſing mankind ſo immerſed in knavery and folly, that they would ſuffer the miniſters of religion to practice ſuch impoſitions as are derogatory to reaſon, and ſubverſive of honeſty. Such a complication of deliberate fraud and bare-faced peculation as your inven-

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tive imagination pourtrays, muſt long before this time have rouſed the community to a ſenſe of its own immediate intereſt, had the evils which you deſcribe, been either real or in exiſtence. There are few ages ſo involved in ignorance, and immerſed in barbariſm, as not to be capable of determining with preciſion, of actions that have an immediate relation to their preſent and future welfare. A paſſive compliance to obnoxious meaſures may probably for a ſeaſon lull them into a thoughtleſs ſecurity; but when the authority, which this compliance eſtabliſhes, begins to act with proper exertion, the good or evil reſulting from ſuch exertion, muſt ſoon be convincing how far their former conduct is praiſe-worthy or reprehenſible. Every meaſure, whether actually for the good of ſociety, or really ſubverſive of it, is capable of bearing a certain exertion, beyond which it cannot go without endangering its own exiſtence. This is a ſelf-evident fact, and needs no demonſtration. But how our anceſtors could be ſo blind to their own intereſt, as to ſuffer the ignominious yoke of folly and knavery for ſo many centuries, without a proper reſiſtance in behalf of common humanity, is a paradox that requires to be elucidated, and is worthy of the fertility of your genius, and the elegance of your ſuperior diction.

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The human mind in all ages, and probably in all countries, is the ſame. Capable of improvement by a proper application. The partial or total neglect of this application forms that wonderful diſtinction in the intellectual improvements of different men in all ages, and kingdoms of the world. To aſſert, or even to ſuppoſe, that thoſe capabilities with which the human mind is endowed, are reſtricted to a certain claſs of men, or to certain countries, is certainly illiberal and unphiloſophical, unworthy of your enlightened underſtanding; and depreciating to the extenſiveneſs of your hiſtorical knowledge. This ſacrifice, in ſupport of a favourite hypotheſis, will by many be deemed neither real patriotiſm, nor true wiſdom. When you boldly conclude that the Clergy of the preſent and paſt ages are both fools and knaves, you ingenuouſly ſet them upon an equality with the Barons and Knights their compeers, who could be ſo illiterate, and yet ſo ſtupid, as to ſuffer ſuch flagrant impoſitions in ſuch important concerns. But experience, that ſage inſtructreſs, informs us, that even genius and erudition bow not always at the hallowed ſhrine of veracity.

It is certainly reprehenſible to deviate from the conduct of the Gentleman, and deſcend to the childiſh but harmleſs effuſions of invective and ſcurrility. To ſay ſuch conduct is unbecoming, unworthy, and illiberal, would be too lenient; to ſay that it is ignorant, fooliſh, and inconſiderate, would be too much condeſcenſion; in adopting ſomething of that method for which you are already ſo notoriouſly conſpicuous. Whatever opinion you undertake to defend, whether religious, moral, or political; though you begin with all imaginable confidence of the rectitude of your conduct, it is an incumbent duty you owe to yourſelf, and to ſociety, to proceed with candour, inveſtigate with attention, and conclude with diffidence, always remembering that infallibility is not the lot of humanity. But when you, upon a very curſory examination, condemn jointly and ſeparately, both men and meaſures, as inimical to the very exiſtence of ſociety, you ſubject yourſelf to that cenſure and contempt which ſuch an injudicious raſhneſs amply deſerves. Nothing can more betray the ignorance of an advocate, and the weakneſs of his cauſe, than to be compelled to uſe abuſive language, and low ſcurrility, in ſupport of that opinion he has undertaken to defend. Truth needs no ornament;

and when ſhe is bedecked with ſuch unnatural and meretricious trappings, ſhe appears under ſuch a diſguiſe as to have the very reſemblance of her conſtant enemy—falſhood.

Your diſintereſtedneſs is very ſuſpicious; your late conduct demonſtrates your inveteracy againſt the eſtabliſhed government of the Church. You enjoy property, the ſpoils of the Church, which no Layman can have any natural, or reaſonable right to, and attempt to defend the poſſeſſion. You have both legally and illegally attempted to deprive your *Pariſh Prieſt* of that litttle competency which he has an undoubted right to, by virtue of his office. You have, by a variety of means, both public and private, attempted to diſturb the peace of ſociety; to overturn the Hierarchy, and to appropriate the prey to private purpoſes. What incendiary motives could ſtimulate you to ſuch unwarrantable proceedings? Was it paſſion? was it intereſt? or both combined? Examine your own breaſt, diveſt yourſelf of prejudice and partiality, lay aſide all ſiniſter views, and you will immediately perceive the ſecret ſprings that give motion to your operations, direct your opinions, and warp your judgment. A little ſelf-examination is indiſpenſably neceſſary, though it come recommended from

from an opponent. Advice, thought not always acceptable, if adopted, may ſometimes be beneficial.

The troubles in a ſiſter kingdom, relative to the very ſubject I have been diſcuſſing, though not alarming, are nevertheleſs illegal and unjuſtifiable. Can you conclude yourſelf innocent if you have by any means contributed to the deluſion, or been inſtrumental in promoting ſuch inſurgency. Would you be willing to give your acquieſcence, and act in concert with that power, the Church of Rome; whoſe infernal machinations are now agitating the deluded populace in Ireland; and have long been the ſcourge and terror of Europe! I hope it is impoſſible. You have proceeded in haſte, and concluded in error. This interpretation is the only palliative that you can offer for attempting to introduce innovations, to promote anarchy and confuſion, by overturning the ſanctioned cuſtoms of revered antiquity, which ought ever to be deemed ſacred and inviolable, till there be a moral neceſſity for their alteration.

Thus, Sir, having taken a ſurvey of the principal arguments, which you adduced for the Abolition of Tythes, and the Reform of the Church

Church Revenue; in the examination of which, and expoſure of their futility, I have been as candid as I poſſibly could, viewing your aſperity ſometimes with a ſmile, at others with pity, as the offspring of a miſguided judgment, and the ebullition of diſappointment. I ſhall now conclude with this caution, that if in future you review this ſubject, and publiſh your opinions, you would deliberate with caution, and conclude with diffidence; for precipitation is apt to fall into miſtakes, and confidence into error.

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